

October 20, 2015

Surplus Properties Task Force  
City of West Linn  
22500 Salamo Rd.  
West Linn, OR 97068

RE: HRB Support for Preservation of Old City Hall

Greetings:

The City of West Linn Historic Review Board (HRB) wishes to lend its support to efforts by the West Linn Historical Society (WLHS) to have the former city hall preserved, restored and reused as an ideal site for an information center and gateway to the Willamette Falls Heritage Area.

We understand the concern that seismic issues could make any reuse expensive. However, we also understand that newly discovered initial construction drawings indicate more steel reinforcement in the concrete structure than was assumed in a 1996 consultant's report, implying that while seismic issues still need to be addressed, the cost may be significantly less than has been estimated.

The WLHS is working with Restore Oregon and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to apply for National Register designation for the building. Both organizations indicate that the building should qualify, especially based on its place in the history of West Linn. In addition to architectural interest, old city hall served as a center of city life, housing council chambers, city offices, our library, police station and post office, as well as an early grocery market.

National Register status will document the importance of the building and help in finding partners and resources to plan and finance its renovation and reuse. A likely outcome could involve some type of public-private partnership, not unlike the building's original use which included store space and a federal post office on the first floor.

The HRB urges the city's task force studying the potential best uses of vacant city properties to consider the important history of the building, its ideal location and suitability as a community asset, and the resources available for its renovation and reuse, especially with expected listing on the National Register. The WLHS, Restore Oregon, SHPO and others have indicated a willingness to participate in this process.

The HRB fully supports historic properties being rehabilitated and reused for they enrich our lives, revitalize areas, and attract visitors. Our old city hall's repurpose and reuse could greatly contribute to West Linn's economic development, heritage, sustainability and recreational goals.

Sincerely,



Adam Petersen, HRB Chair

cc: City Council  
State Historic Preservation Office  
Restore Oregon  
West Linn Paper Company